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# Merriam-Webster's Collegiate® Dictionary

# TENTH EDITION

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**Merriam-Webster, Incorporated  
Springfield, Massachusetts, U.S.A.**

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COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY, TENTH EDITION  
MERRIAM-WEBSTER, INC.

**sur-ceed** \sər-sēs, \sər-\ vb. **sur-ceased**; **sur-ceas-ing** [ME *surseſen*, *surſen*, fr. MF *sursis*; pp. of *surſoir*, fr. L. *supersedre* — more at *SUPERSEDE*] vi (15c) : to desist from action; also : to come to an end: **CEASE** \sēs\ vt. to put an end to: **DISCONTINUE**

**sur-ceive** \sər-sēv, (.sər-) n. (1586) : **CESSATION**: esp. a temporary respite or end (to borrow from my books ~ of sorrow) —E. A. Poe

**sur-charge** \sər-chārj\ vt [ME, fr. MF *surcharge*, fr. *sur-* + *charger* to charge, fr. OF — more at *CHARGE*] (15c) 1: a: **OVERCHARGE** : to charge an extra fee c: to show an omission in (an account) for which credit ought to have been given 2: Brit. **OVERSTOCK** 3: to fill or load to excess (the atmosphere) was **surcharged** with war hysteria —H. A. Chippendale 4 a: to mark a surcharge on (a stamp); b: **OVER-PRINT** (~ a banknote)

**surcharge** n (15c) 1 a: an additional tax, cost, or impost b: an extra fare (a sleeping car ~) c: an instance of surcharging an account 2: an excessive load or burden 3: the action of surcharging: the state of being surcharged 4 a: (1) an overprint on a stamp; specific: one that alters the denomination (2) a stamp bearing such an overprint b: an overprint on a currency note

**sur-cingle** \sər-siŋgəl\ n [ME *surſengle*, fr. MF *surcingle*, fr. *sur-* + *cingle* girdle, fr. L. *cingulum* — more at *CINGULUM*] (14c) 1: a belt, band, or girth passing around the body of a horse to bind a saddle or pack fast to the horse's back 2 *archaic*: the cinchure of a cassock

**sur-coat** \sər-kōt\ n [ME *surcote*, fr. MF, fr. *sur-* + *cote coat*] (13c) : an outer coat or cloak; *specif.*: a tunic worn over armor

**surd** \sərd\ adj [L. *surdus* deaf, silent, stupid] (1551) 1: lacking sense: **IRRATIONAL** (the ~ mystery and the strange forces of existence —D. C. Williams) 2: **VOICELESS** — used of speech sounds

**surd** n (1557) 1 a: an irrational root (as  $\sqrt{3}$ ) b: **IRRATIONAL NUMBER** 2: a surd speech sound

**sur'-shur** esp *Southern* \shōr\ adj **sur-er**; **sur-est** [ME, fr. MF *sur*, fr. L. *securus* secure] (13c) 1: obs: safe from danger or harm 2: firmly established: **STEADFAST** (a ~ hold) 3: **RELIABLE**, **TRUSTWORTHY** 4: marked by or given to feelings of confident certainty (I'm ~ I'm right) 5: admitting of no doubt: **INDISPUTABLE** (spoke from knowledge) 6 a: bound to happen: **INEVITABLE** (~ disaster) b: **BOUND, DESTINED** (is ~ to win) 7: careful to remember; attend to, or find out something (be ~ to lock the door) — **sureness** n — for sure: c: without doubt or question: **CERTAINLY** — to be sure: it must be acknowledged: **ADMITTEDLY**

**syn** **SURE** CERTAIN, POSITIVE, COCKSURE mean having no doubt or uncertainty. **SURE** usu. stresses the subjective or intuitive feeling of assurance (*I felt sure that I had forgotten something*). **CERTAIN** may apply to a basing of a conclusion or conviction on definite grounds or indubitable evidence (police are *certain* about the cause of the fire). **POSITIVE** intensifies sureness or certainty and may imply opinionated conviction or forceful expression of it (I'm *positive* that's the person I saw). **COCKSURE** implies presumptuous or careless positiveness (you're always so *cocksure* about everything).

**sure** adv (14c) : **SURELY**

**usage** Most commentators consider the adverb *sure* to be something less than completely standard; *surely* is usu. recommended as a substitute. Our current evidence shows, however, that *sure* and *surely* have become differentiated in use. *Sure* is used in much more informal contexts than *surely*. It is used as a simple intensive (I can never know how much I bored her, but, be certain, she *sure* amused me —Norman Mailer) and, because it connotes strong affirmation, it is used when the speaker or writer expects to be agreed with (it's a moot point whether politicians are less venal than in Twain's day. But they're *sure* as the devil more intrusive —Alan Abelson) (he *sure* gets them to play —D. S. Looney). *Surely*, like *sure*, is used as a simple intensive (I *surely* don't want to leave the impression that I had an unhappy childhood —E. C. Welsh) but it occurs in more formal contexts than *sure*. Unlike *sure* it may be used neutrally—the reader or hearer may or may not agree (it would *surely* be possible, within a few years, to program a computer to construct a grammar —Noam Chomsky) and it is often used when the writer is trying to persuade (*surely* a book on the avant-garde cannot be so conventional —Karl Shapiro).

**sure-enough** \shūr-ə-nōf\ adj (ca. 1846) : **ACTUAL**, **GENUINE**, **REAL**

**sure enough** adv (ca. 1545) : from one might expect: **CERTAINLY**

**sure-fire** \shūr-fir\ adj (ca. 1909) : certain to get successful or expected results (a ~ recipe)

**sure-foot-ed** \fūt-fəd\ adj (1633) : not liable to stumble, fall, or err — **sure-foot-ed-ly** adv — **sure-foot-ed-ness** n

**sure-hand-ed** \hānd-hād\ adj (1930) : proficient and confident in performance esp. using the hands — **sure-hand-ed-ness** n

**sure-ly** \shūr-ə-ly, esp *Southern* \shōr-ə-ly\ adv (14c) 1: in a sure manner: *archaic*: without danger or risk of injury or loss: **SAFELY** b: (1) with assurance: **CONFIDENTLY** (answered quickly and ~) (2) without doubt: **CERTAINLY** (they will ~ be heard from in the future —R. J. Lifton) 2: **INDEED**, **REALLY** — often used as an intensive (you ~ don't believe that) — **usage** see **SURE**

**sure thing** n (1830) : one that is certain to succeed: a sure bet

**sure-ty** \shūr-tē\, esp *pl.* **ties** [ME *surtie*, fr. MF *sûrité*, fr. L. *securitas* security, fr. *securus*] (14c) 1: the state of being sure: as a: sure knowledge: **CERTAINTY** b: confidence in manner or behavior: **ASSURANCE** 2 a: a formal engagement (as a pledge) given for the fulfillment of an undertaking: **GUARANTEE** b: ground of confidence or security 3: one who has become legally liable for the debt, default, or failure in duty of another — **surety-ship** \shūr-ship\ n

**surety bond** n (1911) : a bond guaranteeing performance of a contract or obligation

**surf** \sərf\ [origin unknown] (1685) 1: the swell of the sea that breaks upon the shore 2: the foam, splash, and sound of breaking waves

**surf** vi (1926) : to ride the surf (as on a surfboard) — **surf-er** n

**sur-face** \sər-fəs\ n [F, fr. *sur-* + *face* face, fr. OF — more at *FACE*] 1: abu. 2: kitten, F-table 3: further 4: ash 5: face 6: mop, mar 7: out 8: chin 9: bet 10: easy 11: go 12: hit 13: ice 14: job 15: sing 16: go 17: law 18: boy 19: thin 20: the 21: foot 22: foot 23: wet 24: vision 25: the 26: foot 27: foot 28: foot 29: foot 30: foot 31: foot 32: foot 33: foot 34: foot 35: foot 36: foot 37: foot 38: foot 39: foot 40: foot 41: foot 42: foot 43: foot 44: foot 45: foot 46: foot 47: foot 48: foot 49: foot 50: foot 51: foot 52: foot 53: foot 54: foot 55: foot 56: foot 57: foot 58: foot 59: foot 60: foot 61: foot 62: foot 63: foot 64: foot 65: foot 66: foot 67: foot 68: foot 69: foot 70: foot 71: foot 72: foot 73: foot 74: foot 75: foot 76: foot 77: foot 78: foot 79: foot 80: foot 81: foot 82: foot 83: foot 84: foot 85: foot 86: foot 87: foot 88: foot 89: foot 90: foot 91: foot 92: foot 93: foot 94: foot 95: foot 96: foot 97: foot 98: foot 99: foot 100: foot 101: foot 102: foot 103: foot 104: foot 105: foot 106: foot 107: foot 108: foot 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foot 1175: foot 1176: foot 1177: foot 1178: foot 1179

(ca. 1604) 1: the exterior or upper boundary of an object or body. 2: a plane or curved two-dimensional locus of points (as the boundary of a three-dimensional region) *(plane ~) <~ of a sphere)* 3: a: the external or superficial aspect of something b: an external part or layer — on the surface 1: to all outward appearances

**surface** *adj* (1664) 1: a: of, located on, or designed for use at the surface of something b: situated, transported, or employed on the surface of the earth (*~ mail*) (*~ vehicles*) 2: appearing to be such on the surface only: SUPERFICIAL (*~ friendships*)

**surface vb** *sur-faced* *sur-fac-ing* *vi* (1778) 1: to give a surface to: as a: to plane or make smooth b: to apply the surface layer to (*~ a highway*) 2: to bring to the surface *~ vi* 1: to work on or to the surface 2: to come to the surface 3: to come into public view: SHOW UP — *sur-fac-er* *n*

**surface-active** *adj* (1920) 1: altering the properties and esp. lowering the tension at the surface of contact between phases (soaps and wetting agents are typical *~ substances*)

**surface of revolution** (1840) 1: a surface formed by the revolution of a plane curve about a line in its plane

**surface-ripened** *vsar-fes-ri-pnd* *adj* (1945) of cheese: ripened by the action of microorganisms (as molds) on the surface

**surface structure** *n* (1964) 1: a formal representation of the phonetic form of a sentence; also: the structure which such a representation describes

**surface tension** *n* (1876) 1: the attractive force exerted upon the surface molecules of a liquid by the molecules beneath that tends to draw the surface molecules into the bulk of the liquid and makes the liquid assume the shape having the least surface area

**surface-to-air** *adj* (1949) 1: launched from the ground against a target in the air

**surfacing** (1882) 1: material forming or used to form a surface

**sur-fac-tant** *(,sor-fak-tnt*, *sor-*) *n* [surface-active + -ant] (1950) 1: a surface-active substance (as a detergent) — *surfactant* *adj*

**surf and turf** *n* (1973) 1: seafood and steaks served as a single course

**surf-bird** *vsor-bord* *n* (1839) 1: a shorebird (*Aphriza virgata*) of the Pacific coasts of America that has a black-tipped white tail

**surf-board** *v,-bord* *n* (ca. 1826) 1: a long narrow buoyant board (as of lightweight wood or fiberglass-covered foam) used in the sport of surfing — *surfboarder* *n*

**surf-boat** *v,-böt* *n* (1847) 1: a boat for use in heavy surf

**surf casting** *n* (1928) 1: a method of fishing in which artificial or natural bait is cast into the open ocean or in a bay where waves break on a beach — *surf caster* *n*

**surf clam** *n* (1884) 1: any of various typically rather large surf-dwelling edible clams (family Mactridae); esp.: a common clam (*Spisula solidissima*) of the Atlantic coast chiefly from Nova Scotia to So. Carolina

**surf-felt** *vsor-fst* *n* [ME *surfait*] 1: MF, fr. *surfer* to overdo, fr. *sur- + faire* to do, fr. *L facere* — more at *DO*] (14c) 1: an overabundant supply: EXCESS 2: an intemperate or immoderate indulgence in something (as food or drink) 3: disgust caused by excess

**surfet** *vi* (14c) 1: to feed, supply, or give to surfet. *~ vi*, archaic: to indulge to satiety in a gratification (as indulgence of the appetite or senses) — *syn* see SATIATE — *surfet-er* *n*

**surf fish** *n* (1882) 1: SURFPERCH

**surf-i-cial** *(,sor-fishl*, *sor-*) *adj* [surface + -cial (as in superficial)] (1892) 1: of or relating to a surface (*~ geologic processes*)

**surf-ing** *vsor-fng* *n* (1926) 1: the sport of riding the surf esp. on a surfboard

**surf-perch** *vsor-perch* *n* (1885) 1: any of a family (Embiotocidae) of small or medium-sized viviparous bony fishes chiefly of shallow water along the Pacific coast of No. America that resemble the perches

**surge** *vsor-j* 1: *vb* surged; *surg-ing* [MF *source*, stem of *sourde* to rise, surge, fr. *L surgere* to go straight up, rise, fr. *sub- up + regere* to lead straight — more at *SUB- RIGHT*] *vi* (1511) 1: to rise and fall actively: TOSS (a ship *surging* in heavy seas) 2: to rise and move in waves or billows: SWELL 3: to slip around a windlass, capstan, or bits — used esp. of a rope 4: to rise suddenly to an excessive or abnormal value (the stock market *~ed* to a record high) 5: to move with a surge or in surges (let the blood *surge* into his face — Harry Hervey) *~ vi* 1: to let go or slacken gradually (as a rope)

**surge** *n* (1520) 1: a swelling, rolling, or sweeping forward like that of a wave or series of waves (*~ of interest*) 2: a: a large wave or billow: SWELL b: (1) a series of such swells or billows (2): the resulting elevation of water level 3: the tapered part of a windlass barrel or a capstan 4: a: a movement (as a slipping or slackening) of a rope or cable b: a sudden jerk or strain caused by such a movement 5: a transient sudden rise of current or voltage in an electrical circuit

**sur-geon** *(,sor-jn*, *sor-*) *n* [ME *surgen*, fr. AF, fr. OF *cirurgien*, fr. *cirurgie* surgery] (14c) 1: a medical specialist who practices surgery

**sur-geon-fish** *v,-fish* *n* (1871) 1: any of a family (Acanthuridae) of tropical bony fishes that have toxic flesh and typically a movable spine on each side of the body near the base of the tail capable of inflicting a painful wound

**surgeon general** *n*, *pl* **surgeons general** (1706) 1: the chief medical officer of a branch of the armed services or of a public health service

**surgeon's knot** *n* (1733) 1: any of several knots used in tying ligatures or surgical stitches: esp.: a reef knot in which the first knot has two turns — see KNOT illustration

**sur-gery** *(,sor-jr*, *sor-je*, *sor-ji*, *sor-je*) *n*, *pl* *ger-ies* [ME *surgerie*, fr. MF *cirurgie*, *surgerie*, fr. L *chirurgia*, fr. Gk *cheirourgia*, fr. *cheirourgos* surgeon, fr. *cheirourgos* doing by hand, fr. *cheir* hand + *ergon* work — more at *CHIR.*] *WORK*] (14c) 1: a branch of medicine concerned with diseases and conditions requiring or amenable to operative or manual procedures 2: alterations made as if by surgery (literary *~*) 3: a Brit: a physician's or dentist's office b: a room or area where surgery is performed 4: a: the work done by a surgeon b: OPERATION

**sur-gi-cal** *vsor-ji-kal* *adj* [surgeon + -cal] (1770) 1: a: of or relating to surgeons or surgery (*~ skills*) b: used in or in connection with surgery c: characteristic of or resembling surgery or a surgeon esp. in control or inciseness (*~ precision*) 2: following or resulting from surgery (*~ fevers*) — *sur-gi-cal-ly* *-,k(-l)ē* *adv*

**sur-ri-mi** *vsu-rē-mē* *n* [Up, chopped meat or fish] (1976) 1: a fish product made from inexpensive whitefish and often processed to resemble more expensive seafood (as crabmeat)

**sur-jec-tion** *(,sor-jek-shn*) *n* [prob. fr. *sur- + -ction* (as in project)] (1964) 1: a mathematical function that is an onto mapping — compare BIJECTION, INJECTION 3

**sur-jec-tive** *-,jek-tiv* *adj* (1964) 1: onto (a set of *~ functions*)

**sur-ly** *vsor-lē* *adj* *sur-lēr*; *-est* [alter. of ME *sirly* lordly, imperious, fr. *sir*] (ca. 1572) 1: *obs.* ARROGANT, IMPERIOUS 2: irritably sulken and churlish in mood or manner: CRABBED 3: menacing or threatening in appearance (*~ weather*) — *syn* see SULLEN — *sur-lēly* *-,lē* *adv*

**sur-li-ness** *-,lē-nas* *n* — *sur-lēly* *adv*

**sur-mise** *(,sor-miz*, *sor-1*) *n* (1569) 1: a thought or idea based on scanty evidence: CONJECTURE 2: a: to suppose b: to surmise; *sur-mis-ing* [ME, to accuse, fr. MF *surmis*, pp. of *surmettre*, fr. L *supermittere* to throw on, fr. *super- + mittre* to send] (1700) 2: to imagine or infer on slight grounds

**sur-mount** *vsor-moint* *vi* [ME, fr. MF *surmonter*, fr. *sur- + monter* to mount] (14c) 1: *obs.* to surpass in quality or attainment: EXCEL 2: to prevail over: OVERCOME (*~ an obstacle*) 3: to get to the top of: CLIMB 4: to stand or sit at the top of — *sur-mount-able* *-,moint-ble* *adj*

**sur-name** *(,sor-nām*) *n* (14c) 1: an added name derived from occupation or other circumstance: NICKNAME 2: the name borne in common by members of a family

**surname** *vi* (15c) 1: to give a surname to

**sur-pass** *vsor-pas* *vi* [MF *surpasser*, fr. *sur- + passer* to pass] (1555) 1: to become better, greater, or stronger than: EXCEED 2: to go beyond: OVERSTEP 3: to transcend the reach, capacity, or powers of *syn* see EXCEED — *sur-pass-able* *-,pas-bēl* *adj*

**sur-pass-ing** *adj* (ca. 1580) 1: greatly exceeding others: of a very high degree — *sur-pass-ing-ly* *-,pas-in-lē* *adv*

**sur-plate** *vsor-plas* *n* [ME *surplis*, fr. OF *surpliz*, fr. ML *superplacitum*, fr. *super-* + *placitum* coat of skins, fr. L, neut. of *pellitus* made of skins, fr. *pellis* skin — more at FELL] (13c) 1: a loose white outer ecclesiastical vestment usu. of knee length with large open sleeves

**sur-prise** *adj* (1845) 1: having a diagonally overlapping neckline or closing (*~ a collar*) (*~ sweater*)

**sur-plus** *vsor-pls* *n* [ME, fr. MF, fr. ML *superplus*, fr. L *super- + plus* more — more at *PLUS*] (14c) 1: a: the amount that remains when use or need is satisfied b: an excess of receipts over disbursements 2: the excess of a corporation's net worth over the par or stated value of its capital stock — *surplus adj*

**sur-plus-age** *(,pla-sē)* *n* (15c) 1: *surplus* 2: a: excessive or nonessential matter b: matter introduced in legal pleading which is not necessary or relevant to the case

**surplus value** *n* (1887) 1: the difference in Marxist theory between the value of work done or of commodities produced by labor and the usu. subsistence wages paid by the employer

**sur-print** *vsor-print* *vt* or *n* (1917) 1: OVERPRINT

**sur-pris-al** *(,sor-rz-əl*) *n* (1591) 1: the action of surprising: the state of being surprised

**surprise** also **sur-prize** *(,sor-rz)* *n* [ME, fr. MF, fr. fem. of *surpris* pp. of *surprendre* to take over, surprise, fr. *sur- + prendre* to take — more at *PRIZE*] (15c) 1: a: an attack made without warning b: taking unawares 2: something that surprises 3: the state of being surprised: ASTONISHMENT

**surprise** also **sur-prize** *vsor-rz* *n* [ME, fr. MF, fr. fem. of *surpris* pp. of *surprendre* to take over, surprise, fr. *sur- + prendre* to take — more at *PRIZE*] (15c) 1: a: an attack made without warning b: taking unawares 2: something that surprises 3: the state of being surprised: ASTONISHMENT

**surprise** also **sur-prize** *vb* *sur-prised*; *sur-pris-ing* *vi* (15c) 1: to attack unexpectedly; also: to capture by an unexpected attack 2: to take unawares; b: to detect or elicit by a taking unawares 3: to strike with wonder or amazement esp. because unexpected *~* to cause astonishment or surprise (her success didn't *~*) — *sur-priser* *n*

**surprise** *syn* SURPRISE, ASTOUND, AMAZE, FLABBERGAST mean to impress forcibly through unexpectedness. SURPRISE stresses causing an effect through being unexpected at a particular time or place rather than by being essentially unusual or novel (*surprised* to find them home). ASTOUND implies surprising so greatly as to seem incredible (a discovery that *astonished* the world). AMAZE stresses the shock of astonishment (*too astounded to respond*). FLABBERGAST means to be bewildered (*amazed* by the immense size of the place). FLABBERGAST may suggest thorough astonishment and bewilderment or dismay (*flabbergasted* by his angry refusal).

**sur-prising** *adj* (1645) 1: of a nature that excites surprise

**sur-pris-ing-ly** *(,sor-rz-pri-zin-lē)* *adv* (1661) 1: in a surprising manner: to a surprising degree (*~ a fast runner*) 2: it is surprising that (*~, voter turnout was high*)

**sur-ra** *vsur-ə* *n* [Marathi *sura* wheezing sound] (1883) 1: a severe *OB* World febrile and hemorrhagic disease of domestic animals that is caused by a flagellate protozoan (*Trypanosoma evansi*) and is transmitted by biting insects

**sur-re-al** *(,sor-rē-əl*, *-rē-əl* also *-rā-əl*) *adj* [back-formation fr. *surrealism*] (1937) 1: having the intense irrational reality of a dream 2: SURREALISTIC — *sur-re-al-ly* *adv*

**sur-re-al-ism** *(,sor-rē-ə-li-zəm*, *-rē-əl* also *-rā-əl*) *n* [F *surrealisme*, fr. *sur- + réalisme*] (1925) 1: the principles, ideals, or practice of producing fantastic or incongruous imagery or effects in art, literature, film, or theater by means of unnatural juxtapositions and combinations — *sur-re-al-ist* *-,list* *n* or *adj*

**sur-re-al-is-tic** *(,sor-rē-ə-lis-tik*, *-rē-əl* also *-rā-əl*) *adj* (1925) 1: of or relating to surrealism 2: having a strange dreamlike atmosphere or quality like that of a surrealist painting — *sur-re-al-is-ti-cally* *-,tik-lē* *adv*

**sur-re-but-ter** *(,sor-(r)-bo-tər*) *n* (ca. 1601) 1: the reply in common law pleading of a plaintiff to a defendant's rebutter

**sur-re-join-der** *(,sor-(r)-jōn-dər*) *n* (ca. 1543) 1: the reply in common law pleading of a plaintiff to a defendant's rejoinder

**sur-rend-er** *(,sor-rēndər*) *vb* *der-ered*; *der-ing* *(,sor-rēng)* [ME, fr. MF *surrendre*, fr. *sur- + rendre* to give back, yield — more at *RENDER*] (15c) 1: a: to yield to the power, control, or possession of another upon compulsion or demand (*~ed the fort*) b: to give up completely or agree to forgo esp. in favor of another 2: a: to give (oneself) over into the power of another esp. as a prisoner b: to give (oneself) over to something (as an influence) *~ vi* 3: to give oneself up into the power of another: YIELD — *syn* see RELINQUISH

**sur-render** *n* (15c) 1: a: the action of yielding one's person or giving up the possession of something esp. into the power of another b: the relinquishment by a patentee of rights or claims under a patent c: to remain in a position of inferiority or prosperity esp. by his wife